

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 ACDA-07 /089 W

----- 007332

R 260850Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6507

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 32317

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, CB, TH

SUBJ: TENSION CONTINUES ALONG SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF THAI-
CAMBODIAN BORDER

REF: BANGKOK 32186

1. SITUATION ALONG THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER IN SOUTHERNMOST PART
OF TRAT PROVINCE AT HAT LEK, REPORTED REFTTEL, REMAINS TENSE.
HARD INFORMATION IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN IN BANGKOK, BUT LAST
IMPORTANT BATTLE APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE NOVEMBER 23.
ONE NEWSPAPER REPORT NOTED THAT CAMBODIANS USED ARTILLERY FOR
THE FIRST TIME NOV 25. PRESS CLAIMS OF CAMBODIAN CASUALTIES
RANGE AS HIGH AS 27 KILLED, A FIGURE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONFIRM AND
DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, WHEREAS ONE THAI POLICEMAN HAS DIED
AND THREE OTHERS--MARINES AND POLICE-- HAVE REPORTEDLY NOW BEEN
WOUNDED. WHILE PRESS IS CLAIMING THAT THAI ARE IN PROCESS OF
DECIDING WHETHER TO TAKE OFFENSIVE ACTION TO REMOVE THE KC FROM
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THE HILLS EAST OF HAT LEK WHICH FORM THE BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO

COUNTRIES, FOREIGN MINISTER UPADIT PACHARIYANKUN IS QUOTED AS STATING THAT TALKS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN BETWEEN THAI AND CAMBODIAN LIAISON OFFICIALS AT THE ARANYAPRATHET-POIPET BORDER POINT IN ORDER TO SEEK PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. HE SUGGESTED THAT THESE PRELIMINARY TALKS MAY LEAD TO HIGHER-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN RTG AND CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS.

2. ACTING CHIEF OF MFA SOUTHEAST ASIA DIVISION TOLD EMBOFF NOV 26 THAT MINISTRY CONSIDERS PRESENT LEVEL OF HOSTILITIES HIGHER THAN PREVIOUSLY THE CASE IN THAT LONG SENSITIVE BORDER AREA BUT NOT "GRAVE". HE CONFIRMED THAT THAI HAVE PROPOSED A CEASE-FIRE TO THE CAMBODIANS.

3. HOPEFULLY, THE SITUATION WILL NOT WORSEN ON THAT RELATIVELY WORTHLESS PIECE OF LAND, BUT IT BEARS CONTINUED WATCHING. ITS HANDLING SHOULD GIVE GOOD INDICATION OF POLICY OF EACH GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE OTHER IN VIEW OF THAILAND'S OCTOBER 6 CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, ON WHICH CAMBODIANS HAVE STILL NOT COMMENTED.
WHITEHOUSE

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